

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DUBLIN 00289 011738Z

72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-11 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-02 SPC-03

STR-08 TRSE-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 PA-04

USIA-15 PRS-01 SAM-01 DRC-01 /145 W

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R 011644Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5429

INFO USMISSION BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION OECD PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EC, EI

SUBJECT: FONMIN PUTS TOP PRIORITY ON EC COMMUNITY

1. IN SPEECH TO DUBLIN ROTARY CLUB, FONMIN FITZGERALD SAID THAT MAIN PLANK OF IRISH POLICY IS TO STRENGTHEN EC UNITY, EVEN AT EXPENSE OF SHORT-TERM COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE. HE COMPARED IRELAND TO BENELUX COUNTRIES IN ITS "COMMUNITY-MINDED" INSTINCTS.

2. FITZGERALD ANALYZED THE "UNHAPPY" PAST YEAR FOR COMMUNITY, USING MOST FRANK TERMS EVER HEARD FROM AN IRISH OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN AND PLACING SUBSTANTIAL BLAME ON BOTH FRENCH AND BRITISH. COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM, HE SAID, WAS CUMBERSOME BECAUSE

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PAGE 02 DUBLIN 00289 011738Z

FRENCH AHD REFUSED TO ACCEPT APPLICATION OF "QUALIFIED MAJORITY

DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURE." FRANCE HAD ALSO "BEEN JEALOUS OF EUROPE'S INDEPENDENCE FROM THE U.S.," A CONCERN WHICH OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS SHARED IN VARYING DEGREES. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, THE "STRONGLY NATIONALIST VEIN OF FRENCH POLICY" HAD PREVENTED FRANCE FROM RALLYING EC PARTNERS TO A "MORE EUROPEAN CONCEPT, WHICH ALONE COULD SECURE FRANCE'S AMBITION OF A EUROPE LESS DEPENDENT ON THE UNITED STATES."

2. BRITAIN, SAID FITZGERALD, HAD UNFORTUNATELY ELEVATED REGIONAL POLICY INTO A MAJOR POLITICAL ISSUE, SO THAT A REGIONAL FUND "MUCH LARGER THAN NEEDED TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEMS OF THE REALLY DISADVANTAGED REGIONS OF THE COMMUNITY" HAD TO BE PROPOSED. THIS IN TURN WORRIED FRANCE, WHICH THOUGHT THAT ITS DECLINING AGRICULTURAL AREAS NEEDED TO BE TREATED AS GENEROUSLY AS DECLINING INDUSTRIAL AREAS IN BRITAIN. GERMANY, WHICH HAD BEEN PREPARED TO AID SEVERE REGIONAL PROBLEMS OF IRELAND AND ITALY, HAD RESISTED A FUND ON SCALE NEEDED TO MEET BRITISH AND FRENCH DEMANDS. THUS EC HAD COME TO A "TRIANGULAR DEADLOCK."

4. FITZGERALD ALSO CRITICIZED WIDESPREAD TENDENCY OF EC MEMBERS TO ELEVATE MINOR COMMERCIAL MATTERS INTO ISSUES OF VITAL NATIONAL IMPORTANCE. FOR IRELAND, DANGERS ARE CLEAR AND COMMUNITY IS VERY IMPORTANT. AMONG OTHER VIRTUES, IT HAS TRANSFORMED IRELAND'S "EXCESSIVELY DEPENDENT ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP" WITH BRITAIN. FITZGERALD THUS PLEDGED TO STRENGTHEN EC AT ALL COSTS.

5. COMMENT: FITZGERALD PLEDGE SHOULD NOT BE READ AS MERE PLATITUDE. EC UNITY MAY INDEED BE MAIN IRISH GOAL DURING EC AND US/EC MEETINGS. FURTHER, IRISH CONCEPT OF UNITY MAKES THEM MORE WILLING THAN MOST OTHER EUROPEANS TO ACCOMMODATE FRENCH. AT SAME TIME, WE NOTE THAT FITZGERALD HAS NOW BEEN OPENLY CRITICAL OF FRANCE FOR FIRST TIME. FONOFF CONTACTS HAVE BEEN EVEN MORE CRITICAL OFF THE RECORD. (SEE DUBLIN 242) IRISH MAY STILL COME OUT WITH PRO-FRENCH LINE, BUT AT LEAST IT IS NO LONGER BLINDLY PRO-FRENCH.
MOORE

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